

DELEGATE WHEATLEY: I yield three minutes, Mr. Chairman, to Delegate Vecera.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Vecera.

DELEGATE VECERA: Mr. Chairman and fellow delegates, we have to have this constitution curtail the democratic involvement of our people through the various means. The judiciary has been curtailed and taken from the people. The legislative has been reduced in size so that the rural counties no longer have a voice in the government. The executive has been stripped of some of its responsibility.

I say to you that we have an opportunity, whether we defeat it or not, at least we are making our point, we have an opportunity in this particular section in which the people, the local counties have a right to elect as they see fit by referendum procedure the method of electing or selecting their school board.

I think it is imperative that we retain some of the significant aspects of a democratic society. I think we have eroded too much in the present draft of this constitution and think we ought to retain some of the principles that made our country great. I do not think this section that we are advocating will harm anything whatsoever and might in these turbulent times of education have some beneficial effects.

Education is not the same as it was in 1867, as it was under the old Constitution. It has changed drastically. Unless we meet the times, unless we change with the times, we are going to have turmoil and chaos in our hands in the educational field as is demonstrated throughout the nation.

Baltimore City gives great evidence that it desires and calls for a change. Some of the urban areas will do the same. I do not think there will be any danger in this particular amendment. I hope you will defeat the amendment and go for the majority on section 5.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Lord.

DELEGATE LORD: I will yield three minutes to Delegate Hanson.

DELEGATE HANSON: Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment. I think Delegate Moser has stated well the problems that are contained in this section and so has Delegate Maurer.

I think that there is no need for this kind of a section in the state constitution. The General Assembly has now the power to regulate this problem by law insofar as

that power is granted by this constitution. It does nothing more than do what already can be done by the General Assembly. Beyond that there are some severe problems that I think exist within the section.

One of these is the question of fiscal authority of the school boards. Some time ago when we were talking about the local government article, we talked about the problems of providing an independent fiscal base or taxing power, if you will, for inter-governmental authorities or other kinds of special districts. It seems to me that inherent within this section is the possibility that the General Assembly might by law, or a local government might by charter, if indeed under this section it could by charter, which is uncertain, permit a school board to become a special purpose taxing district.

This, it would seem to me, would be inconsistent with the general tenor of the constitution we are writing and, in addition, it would be extremely bad public policy because it seems to me we should have only one taxing authority within each jurisdiction, that being the general government and as important as education is, it should not have independent taxing authority. It seems to me that the admonition which has been made that war is too important to be left to generals ought also to apply to the field of education in which I have spent my entire adult life. Education is too important to be left to educators. It seems to me that we should leave the educational policy of this State to the General Assembly. I am not at all convinced that the last word in wisdom in educational organization has yet been spoken. If so, I somewhere missed hearing it and I believe that we should permit the General Assembly the flexibility to reflect upon wisdom as it evolves and establish the organization that it believes needs to be established for the effective administration of the school system of the State and the effective administration of the schools at the local level.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Wheatley.

DELEGATE WHEATLEY: How much time is remaining, Mr. Chairman?

THE CHAIRMAN: You have about nine minutes; a little less, about eight and a half.

DELEGATE WHEATLEY: I yield at this time two minutes to Delegate Robie.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Kathleen Robie.